

## The Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health

Department of Family and Preventive Medicine  
University of Utah School of Medicine  
2021

*"Protecting the worker and the environment through interdisciplinary  
education, research, and service."*

- Established in 1977 to meet the need for a comprehensive occupational and environmental health and safety program in the West.
- Became a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Education and Research Center (ERC) in 1978. One of only 18 ERCs in the nation.
- In 2018, approved by NIOSH for an additional five years with increased funding now to \$1.8 million per year (Best score in US!)
- Provides academic (master and Ph.D.) and Continuing Education courses, conducts research, and provides service in Occupational Medicine, Industrial Hygiene, Ergonomics and Safety, Injury Prevention, and Hazardous Materials.
- Implemented unique Master of Science in Occupational Health Program. First graduates 2009. Developed PhD in Occupational and Environmental Health 2012.
- Implemented new undergraduate minor in Occupational Safety and Health.
  - NIOSH estimates 25,000 shortfall in safety professionals.
- Invented Occupational Safety and Health Solutions course to take teams of students to solve real-world OSH problems for businesses, improving competitiveness of businesses.
- Over 711 graduates of academic programs since 1977.
- High ratings from graduates (99.2 % are satisfied or very satisfied with our programs).
- 24,948 Continuing Education and Outreach students.
- Serving over 3,000 businesses.
- Common musculoskeletal disorders (e.g., shoulder tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow) are markedly increased from cardiovascular disease risks.
- Research to prevent trucking deaths (4,500/yr.) and nursing injuries transferring patients.
- Research showing COVID likely spread by microdroplets and aerosols
  - Also explains ongoing spread despite masks and lockdowns, which are likely only partially effective
- Developed the only occupational health guideline for COVID
- Begun RECOVER COVID-19 CDC study of infection rates among healthcare, first responder, and frontline workers. Helps identify post-vaccination immunity, recurrences, etc.

- Faculty lead development of national guidelines for treatment of occupational injuries.
- Published national treatment guidelines (>19,000 references)
- Graduates address the fact that occupationally-related illnesses and injuries cost more than \$240 billion annually, equal to the cost of heart disease and cancer.
- Each day, 9,000 of the nation's workers sustain disabling injuries on the job; 137 people die from work-related illnesses; economic burden equivalent to cancer and heart disease.